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ABSTRACT

The history of nonacademic staff in Western European and U.S. colleges is traced, and employment patterns at one major research university since 1924 are examined, since nonacademic personnel management is one concern of institutional researchers. Nonacademic staff are categorized as follows: professional nonfaculty, clerical/secretarial, technical paraprofessional, skilled crafts, and service/maintenance. A change in the employment structure of U.S. colleges in the late 1960s is attributed in part to a rise in scientific research and instruction, a concern for the well-being of students, and changes in business technology. The case study university created a nonacademic personnel office unit in 1956 when the most significant increase in nonacademic staff seemed to be for library and research staff and for laboratory and research technicians. By 1984 the most significant increase was for nonacademic professional staff, which represented nearly half the total nonacademic employees. Secretaries and clerical employees account for the largest single body of nonacademic employees. Today, the percentage of nonacademic staff is almost equal to the percentage of faculty. (SW)

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Non-Academic Employees in Higher Education

A Historical Overview

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1917 Cathedral of Learning

Pittsburgh, PA 15260

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Running Head: Non-Academic Employees in Higher Education

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This paper was presented at the Twenty-Sixth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Marriott Orlando World Center, Orlando, Florida, June 22-25, 1986. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

Ann K. Dickey, Chair
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ABSTRACT

A huge body of workers has joined the traditional participants in American colleges and universities. This group of non-academic or staff employees, virtually non-existent until the late 19th century, now outnumbers the faculty and could be considered chiefly responsible for the successful daily operation of every institution of higher learning. Lacking previous research regarding these employees, this paper reviews educational history and the statistics at one doctorate-granting institution to document the magnitude and causes of this dramatic growth.

Non-Academic Employees in Higher Education: A Historical Overview

Throughout most of their history, institutions of higher learning have uniquely combined instructors and students into a functional organizational framework. The traditional roles of faculty, administrators, tutors (recent graduates augmenting the faculty) and the students have stood relatively unchanged in the last 700 years. While sharing many similarities with manufacturing and service industries, colleges and universities in the Western world have retained an unusual cooperative style of internal organization and have cultivated an intimate relationship with their clientele, the students.

In just the last century, however, a number of forces have given rise to a body of workers in colleges and universities who do not fit into any of the classic organizational groups either by qualifications or duties. Particularly in the United States, this group of non-academic employees or staff now outnumber the faculty nationally and have subsumed from the faculty the responsibility for the day-to-day non-instructional activities of virtually every higher education institution.

In recent years, a number of topics have arisen in regards to human resource management, institutional governance and employee productivity which institutional researchers have faced and addressed. Almost exclusively, however, the personnel studied have been the traditional participants in college and university structures - the faculty and administrators. There are now signs that institutional research must begin to consider the non-academic employee in these various issues, for as the number of staff grow, a separate professional conscience within the campus community is forming.

There is, at present, an almost total lack of any overall discussion of staff employees in the literature of higher education, either from the

perspective of their formation as a body, or their composition and demographics today. This deficiency is partially due to their relatively recent appearance. Largely, however, the lack of demographic data results directly from the fact that most institutions had no centralized personnel office for staff employees until well after the Second World War. This document will discuss the historical evolution of college and university staff in Western Europe and the United States and discuss specific data on the patterns of employment at one major research university during the last 60 years.

A general review of educational history in the context of non-academic staff employment focuses on summary works such as Rashdall (1895), Rudolph (1962) and Veysey (1970). Developments in the 20th century are viewed in relation to the demographic data of one doctorate-granting institution which has exhibited much of the change and expansion characterized by higher education in general since 1900. Institutional source documents and data bases are used to construct a modern demographic history of staff employment. In particular, trends within the overall increase in institutional utilization of staff are highlighted and their implications for institutional researchers are noted.

For purposes of this study, staff are defined in the following categories in use by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission:

Clerical/Secretarial - secretaries, typists, stenographers, computer support and other administrative support assistants and clerks

Professional Non-Faculty - professional personnel in areas such as engineering, health practice, computers, budget and finance, human resources, public affairs, student services, as well as non-faculty librarians, research assistants, athletic coaches and trainers and general administrative personnel

Technical/Paraprofessional - artisans, audio-visual specialists, laboratory, research and computer technicians

Skilled Crafts - printing workers, mechanics and trades workers, such as plumbers, carpenters and electricians

Service/Maintenance - custodial and maintenance staff

The key points in separating staff employees from other members of the university community is that they are not primarily students, do not have the rights and responsibilities of faculty members, such as tenure or instruction, and do not have the large scale managerial responsibilities of executive staff. But, these persons are fully employed by the institution, being paid a regular salary and not merely being contracted by the institutions or solely dependent upon the institution while employed elsewhere.

Discussion

History of Staff Employment in Western Europe

While the history of higher education extends back to the days of the height of the Greek and Roman empires, the history of staff employees in higher education does not. The universities of Greece and Rome were not organized institutions of higher learning as we conceive of them. Rather, they can be better envisioned as associations of instructors who banded together out of mutual benefit. Students generally lived with their particular instructor and any fees or honoraria were paid directly to the instructor.

Not until the early Middle Ages, from the 12th to the 13th centuries, are there conclusive signs of actual organized institutions of higher learning that could be called universities. Institutions in France and Italy exhibited a representative form of democratic organization with faculty and students heavily participating in the administration of the university, as well as in the day-to-day operational concerns. It is not until later in the 13th

century that student participation in institutional governance is curtailed in England and in the 16th century at Oxford when faculty political power is greatly limited.

Reviews of medieval education history such as Rashdall (1895), Cobban (1975) and Lindsay and Holland (1930) explain that the development of university administration gave rise to the creation of a number of offices equivalent to those held by many executive staff members today. In the early years of the Middle Ages, persons in some of these positions were elected by the faculty and/or students, so that individuals could not accumulate any great amount of influence over the school. Typically, the senior positions of this type included the Chancellor, the Rector(s), the Procurator and the Deans, the latter two being the elected representatives of the students and the masters, respectively. Other minor administrative officials included the Treasurer, Notary, Beadles (Bedels), Taxors, and the Advocate. The Notary served as scholastic accountant and librarian; the Beadles served many purposes, such as handling class schedules, relaying communications to students, and representing the Rector at public occasions; the Taxors set rental rates for what would be called off-campus housing today; and the Advocate was the legal counsel of the university.

Only one position can be found representing a position that would equate to the non-academic employee of today. Rashdall, in his chapter on the University of Bologna, discusses the 'special Bedels.' These persons were separate from the General or University Bedel, each Doctor having his own. It was these employees who "looked after his (the Doctor's) school, open and shut the door, swept it out twice a month, strewed the floor with straw in winter and carried his Doctor's books to school." As opposed to laymen whose livelihood depended on the university but were not employed directly by the

institution, the special Bedels were remunerated by the master's students. They, like the General Bedel, also served the formal role of preceding the Rector in public processions. This evidence makes the special Bedels the only concrete example of staff employees in European colleges and universities in the Middle Ages.

There were also a large number of laymen who were greatly, if not solely dependent on the universities for their livelihood. Mostly, these lay dependents were tradesmen of the town whose occupation existed because of the university. Among these were the servants of scholars and generic merchants such as food and drink dealers and landlords. There were also those merchants dealing in specific items used by the schools such as the writers and stationers (Stationarii and Librarii) or booksellers, whose trade was heavily regulated and controlled by the universities. In turn, papermakers, illuminators and binders were also subject to the control of the larger institutions. Moneylenders and pawnbrokers whose primary trade was with students were policed by the university. Also, certain health professionals, such as chirurgeons and barbersurgeons could not practice except under the supervision of the university's Physicians, while the apothecaries depended on these Physicians for the dispensing of drugs.

A number of factors would point to the benefit of this dependency relationship, as opposed to an outright hiring of these trade and craft workers by the institution, and the resultant lack of evidence of staff employees. First, university governance was very much shared by the faculty, students and officers nearly until the time of the founding of the colleges in colonial America. As a result, much of what would today be considered staff work was performed by the masters, students, or their servants. Second, universities were very flexible in that they owned little in the way of physical plant. It

is likely, therefore, that the need for the modern equivalent of service/ maintenance staff or engineers and other physical plant specialists was small. Last, the universities of the middle ages simply were not very large institutions. According to Rashdall, enrollments at Bologna or Paris never exceeded 6,000 to 7,000 while enrollment at Oxford approximated 1,500 to 3,000 at its height in the Middle Ages. Few other European institutions had enrollments approaching these amounts at any time prior to 1600.

History of Staff Employment in America, 1636-1920

In many important ways, the colonists who settled America used their former homeland's universities, especially Oxford and Cambridge, as the models for their institutions of higher education. If anything, however, the English system was simplified to eliminate many of the non-faculty types of employee. References are not made to officials equivalent to the Beadle or Taxor and the only official generally discussed is the President. Given the size of the colonial institutions, rarely exceeding 100 students, it is not surprising that most, if not all, of the duties of running the school were performed by the President and the masters.

In Rudolph (1962), the discussion of colonial American colleges would imply that the only source of staff employment would have been due to their residential nature. Many of the students came from long distances and the cities often had insufficient facilities for the students to rent, so the colleges took some of the responsibility for room and board. Similarly, it is possible that another source of lay dependents, if not actual employees of the colonial colleges, would have started in the early to mid- 18th century with the advent of laboratories and technical experimentation. It is likely that college laboratories employed some laboratory assistants who handled routine maintenance and set-up chores. In both cases, however, colonial and early

19th century American colleges lacked the enrollments to justify the employment of more than a handful of such workers.

A number of major factors, however, led to a change in the employment structure of American colleges and universities in the second half of the 19th century. The persistent rise in scientific research and instruction, the concern for the physical well-being of students as well as the mental, the growth of a class of alumni and, most important, changes in business technology all gave cause to the birth of the modern staff employee. The first stage of this growth occurred in the late 1860's and early 1870's. This was followed by a second stage of growth in the 1890's that has truly not ceased to this day.

Veysey (1970) points to the presidencies of men like Charles W. Eliot, Andrew D. White and James B. Angell as initiating the changes in the way colleges and universities operated. Their business-like mentalities and concern for institutional budgets and public relations established new standards for academic administrators. Especially the concern for broadening the base of support of their organizations led these men to examine the statistics of their schools and create offices and staffs that could produce and analyze these numbers. Yet, the incredible increase in staff employees did not begin until later as these leaders preferred to keep their hands on the reins of the institution directly.

It is not until the 1890's that college and university administrations began to form the nucleus of services and functions seen in the modern higher education institution. The new generation of presidents, such as William Rainey Harper, were even more of a corporate nature than Eliot and his contemporaries. Even more important, however, was the development of administration as being connoted with a certain state of mind, as Veysey puts it. The

invention and refinement of the typewriter created, or at least facilitated the expansion of written communication and information storage. The class of employee including typists, secretaries and stenographers blossomed almost overnight into a sizable group of employees. The expansion of the duties of the offices of the Registrar and the Bursar lead to a distribution of administrative duties to professional staff members who were not officers of the institution. In 1900, the first book on academic managership, College Administration by C.F. Thwing appeared, providing presidents with a blueprint for creating this new style of university managerial staff. The first decade of the 20th century saw a flurry of articles on the subject as the new bureaucracy took control of the leadership of American higher learning.

Staff Employment in the 20th Century

The history of higher learning in America since World War I is one of enormous growth and expansion on all fronts. While the number of institutions nationally has doubled from 1930 to today, federal government data show that enrollments have risen from just over 1,000,000 to 7,477,000 in 1983. Despite the Depression and predicted postwar economic difficulties, colleges and universities have continued to flourish. The G.I. Bill provided thousands of veterans the opportunity to attend college and the baby boom generation led to the explosion of higher education in the 1960's.

Throughout this growth, however, there is still little knowledge regarding the staff employee. Principally, the source of the problem lies in the lack of organized personnel efforts in the individual institutions. Sutherland (1972) points out that prior to the American entry in World War II, only five of the "leading institutions" in the United States had established a personnel program to administer and maintain records of the staff personnel. Since it was the responsibility of the individual schools and departments to

maintain personnel records, there are no national and few institution-wide records to be had regarding the number and type of these employees until the late 1950's and early 1960's.

The only attempt by the federal government to assess the size of the staff of institutions of higher education came as part of the early Higher Education General Information Survey (HEGIS) effort of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. In 1967, 1972 and 1976, colleges and universities were surveyed regarding the number of professional and non-professional employees by type of activity. The aggregate figures nationally for staff, executive staff, faculty and graduate student employees from the fall, 1972 and fall, 1976 reports show that while each of the groups increased in size over the four-year period, the number of staff employees increased much more than the other groups. Although this survey is no longer conducted, anything close to the same rate of increase shown in the early 1970's would indicate that well over 1,000,000 staff employees are working at institutions of higher education in the United States today.

The university being used as the data source in this paper did not create a staff personnel office unit 1956-57. Therefore, there are no institution-wide personnel data available prior to this time, and reliable data are not available for the years preceding 1972. The only consistent comparative record of employment that one can use for most of this century are the annual telephone directories. These directories include the name of almost every employee of the institution and, for many years, also include the person's job title. The only major flaw to using these documents as a database is the exclusion of the service/maintenance staff and the unionized skilled crafts staff.

In 1924-25, the university employed a total of 118 staff persons, including, 82 clerical/secretarial staff, 29 professional staff, 5 technicians and 2 mechanics. By 1954-55, the total number of staff employees had reached 699, comprised of 336 clerical/secretarial staff, 268 professional staff, 78 technical/paraprofessional staff and 17 skilled craftsmen. Overall, this rise represented nearly a 500 percent increase in 30 years. The most significant increases seem to have come in the library and research staff and in the laboratory and research technicians. Both of these increases would indicate that the University was heavily emphasizing its research mission and stressing the importance of graduate education.

By 1984-85, the number of staff at the university had risen to 3,114. The total staff population had increased over 2500 percent from 1924-25. By far, the most significant increase is that of the professional staff, which represent nearly half of the total staff employees. Of note are the student service specialists, which numbered only 3 in 1924-25, but now total 163. Most important, however, are the number of persons in "general administration." These persons, many of whom are simply called administrative specialists, numbered only 9 in 1924-25, but now account for 542 staff members.

Also, while the percentage increase is not as significant, it is important to emphasize the large numbers of secretaries, typists and stenographers. Accounting for 72 of the 118 staff sixty years ago, their percentage representation of the total staff is not that great today. These staff do represent, however, the largest single body of staff employees, a total of 1,095, in 1984-85. When one recalls that the total enrollment of the university was only around 100 some ninety years ago and the lack of evidence for more than a few staff personnel, this figure is overwhelming.

These data point out the overriding importance of the administrative function in higher education management in the 20th century. Even more perspective can be gained when one views the total population of employees at the university over this period. The university telephone directories also include the listings for executive staff, faculty, research associates and graduate student employees. Figure 1 summarizes this information, emphasizing the shift in the proportion of institutional employment from the faculty positions to a more equal balance of faculty and staff employment.

Insert Figure 1 about here

In 1924-25, the university employed 538 faculty, 16 executive staff and 20 graduate student employees compared to the 118 staff discussed above. Faculty represented 77.7% of the total persons employed (remembering, of course, that this percentage might be slightly lower if data were available for those staff members excluded from the telephone directories). Staff employment accounted for only 17.1% of the university employee community. By 1954-55, the faculty share of the total institutional employment was only 62.5%, while 29.6% of the persons working at the University were staff. Today, the percentage of university employees who are staff very nearly equals the percentage for faculty, being 39.9% and 40.6%, respectively. The number of graduate student employees, including graduate student assistants, teaching assistants and teaching fellows, has also risen significantly from only 2.9% in 1924-25 to 16.0% today.

Another way of viewing the magnitude of the growth of the number of staff employees at the university is displayed in Figure 2. In this chart, the

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Insert Figure 2 about here

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staff is indexed (1924-25=100.0) against the number of number of faculty and the student headcount enrollment. Obviously, the relative number of staff has exploded as compared to the relative faculty headcounts, which have only slightly exceeded the increase in enrollment. It needs to be reemphasized that, while there are a number of "new" staff categories in recent years, such as the various levels of computer support personnel and personnel specialists, the largest growth is shown in the categories that have existed since early in the century. It is the phenomenal demand for secretaries, general administrative staff and library and research assistants that most account for the large volume of staff personnel today.

Conclusions

Today, the university employs 3,795 staff persons when one includes these persons not listed in the telephone directories, actually outnumbering the total faculty and research associates. At the present time, there is no reason to suspect that this dominance of staff employees will diminish. The bureaucratic character of higher education management will always require large numbers of professional and clerical/secretarial staff to operate the institutions. Governmental compliance regulations show no trend of decreasing, therefore the need for records maintenance and reporting will remain high. The ever-increasing importance of research, particularly at institutions such as the one studied herein, should heighten the need for research assistants, technicians and health professionals. While the physical plants of many universities are not growing, few, if any, are shrinking, so that the need for service/maintenance and skilled crafts persons should not decline appreciably. Lastly, while it is optimistic to predict that the new information technology of computers, microcomputers and personal computers will reduce the need for staff employees, it is unclear that these machines have

not actually increased the need for human maintenance over the huge databases and subjective analysis of the voluminous reports. Higher education is, after all, an enterprise of human beings, so it would be surprising to see any serious reduction in its dependence on that very important source to keep it functioning.

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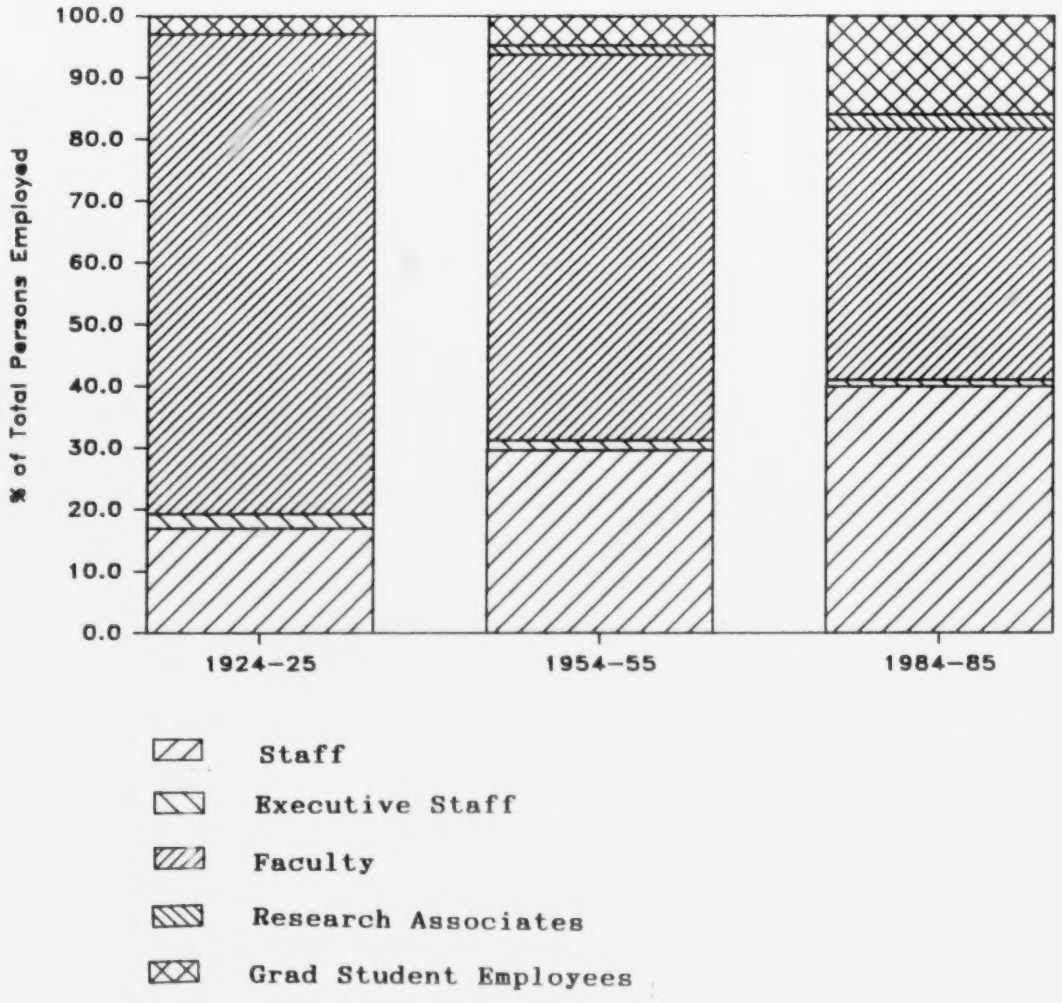
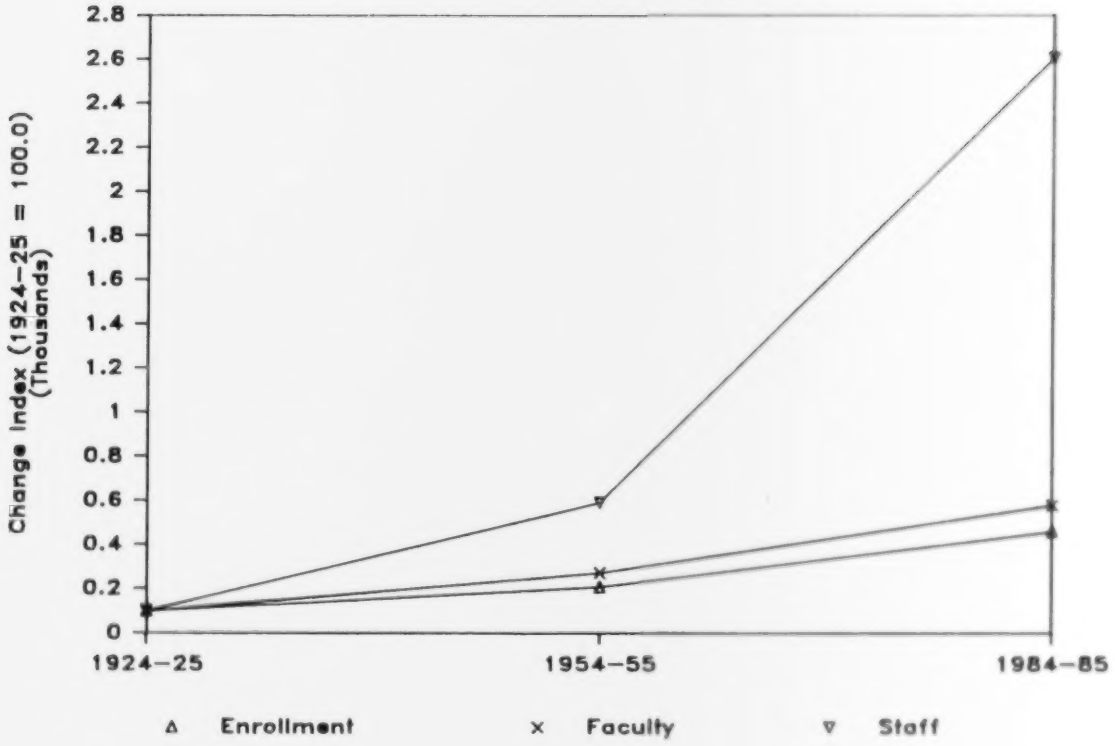
Figure Captions

Figure 1. Distribution of all employees at a doctorate-granting university by major job type

Figure 2. Index of student enrollment and faculty and staff employment (1924-25 = 100.0)


100.0
90.0
80.0
70.0
60.0
50.0
40.0
30.0
20.0
10.0
0.0
% of Total Persons Employed
1924-25
1954-55
1984-85
Staff
Executive Staff
Faculty
Research Associates
Grad Student Employees


Change Index (1924–25 = 100.0)
(Thousands)
2.8
2.6
2.4
2.2
2
1.8
1.6
1.4
1.2
1
0.8
0.6
0.4
0.2
0
1924–25
1954–55
1984–85
Enrollment
Faculty
Staff